T. S. Eliot's Plays — In Search of Self-identity and Toward Reconciliation with the Reality

T. S. Eliot の詩劇

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I. Introduction

Human kind cannot bear very much reality.
(*Murder in the Cathedral*, Part II, p. 271)[1)]

This sense of human beings' incapacity of grasping Reality, often accompanied by the sense of meaninglessness of life, is one of the prominent themes throughout Eliot's poetic works from such early poems as "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady" to the last major poems *Four Quartets*. His career as a poet can be seen as a course in search of a way to conquer the meaninglessness of life through attainment of Reality.[2)] In his first play *Murder in the Cathedral*, he has the above lines said by the Archbishop Thomas Becket confronting his death, and this theme consistently appears in all of his five verse plays: *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939), *The Cocktail Party* (1949), *The Confidential Clark* (1954) and *The Elder Statesman* (1958) which he wrote after his conversion to Anglo Catholic in 1927. Especially, the reality of one's own self, or of one's own identity, is a matter of Eliot's greatest concern. In this article, we shall see how the problems of most of characters in Eliot's plays are loss of his or her own identity. We shall also see how some of them find salvation through recovering the lost identity, thereby reconciling with the reality of their own self.

II. Summary of the Plots

Murder in the Cathedral was written for production at the Canterbury Festival, June 1935, based on the martyrdom of the Archbishop Thomas Becket, who was assassinated by Henry VIII at the Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. The play consists of two parts, with an interlude in between: Part I begins with the return of Becket from exile in France, followed by four temptations that he was subjected to. The first tempter urges him to get reconciled with the King Henry so that he may enjoy physical ease and pleasures in which he used to indulged himself. Becket resists him because he understands that the broken favour could not be regained again: as he says, "Saver/ The cord, shed the scale. Only/ The fool, fixed in his folly, may think/ He can turn the wheel on which he turns" (p.247). The second tempter urges him to try to regain the Chancellorship, which he gave up when he became the Archbishop. As the Chancellor, Becket would be able to have even stronger influence than the King over the politics, and then, he would be able to exercise that power for good purposes. Yet, Becket resists this temptation, too, seeing that

going back to the worldly power is giving up holiness– "what was once exaltation/ Would now only be mean descent" (p. 250). The third tempter suggests that Becket should take sides with revels against the King, to help the people and free them from the tyranny of the King. Becket readily rejects him, too, asking, "if the Archbishop cannot trust the King,/ How can he trust those who work for King's undoing?" (p. 252) Yet, when the fourth tempter appears, Becket recoils because he did not expect more than three. This tempter tries to make Becket deliberately seek martyrdom for everlasting fame, that is, to make him seek to do the right thing for the wrong purpose, thereby debasing his act of surrendering himself. Confronting this temptation, Becket chooses to be killed all the same. In the interlude, he preaches his Christmas sermon. Then, in Part II, he meets four Knights sent by the King. They demand him to absolve those bishops who have been excommunicated by the Pope for crowning the Henry. At the same time, they announce him the King's order to leave England. Becket refuses to do either and murdered by them. After the assassination, the Knights appeal the audience that their motives are disinterested and even that Becket was in a sense killed by himself by incurring his own death. The priests at Canterbury first lament the loss of their Archbishop, yet come to realise that the new martyr's death will strengthen the Church, and thank God for the atoning blood of Christ and martyrs. The play ends with the priests' prayer for the mercy of God, asking Becket to pray for them.

The Family Reunion takes place at Wishwood, in the North England, where the old family of the Monchenseys has been living in a country house. The play is divided into Part I and Part II and develops around the birthday party of the eldest of the family, Amy, Dowager Lady Monchensey, to which all the family members are supposed to come back to celebrate her. Part I begins with the scene where Amy, her three younger sisters, Ivy, Violet and Agatha, the two brothers of her deceased husband, Gerald and Charles, and the daughter of her cousin, Mary, are waiting for her three sons, Harry, John and Arthur. Especially they are looking forward to have Harry back, for he has been away for eight years since he got married with a girl whom Amy disapproved of. John and Arthur are late but Harry comes home in time for the dinner and is told that Amy has kept everything as it was eight years ago and waited for Harry to come back to take charge of the whole household. Harry has come back alone because he lost his wife in a sea storm when she was swept away from the deck, and it turns out that he is obsessed by the notion that he pushed her off the deck. He has been haunted by visions of Eumenides ever since. In Part II, It is reported that John and Arthur have respectively an accident and so failed to be back. It is also revealed that Harry's father once tried to kill Amy when Harry was in her womb but prevented by Agatha who was then in love with him and felt the coming baby might have been hers. Yet paradoxically, when Harry knows such a sad fact about his own birth, he somehow feels liberated and decides to leave Wishwood again and start a new life. Amy, having seen him off, dies perhaps of heart-attack.

The Cocktail Party consists of three acts. Act I begins with a cocktail party from which the hostess, Lavinia, is absent. She has just left home, forgetting having invited some guests at home and consequently leaving her husband Edward to cope with them. Among the guests is a girl, Celia, with whom Edward has been having an affair, but once Lavinia is gone, Edward realizes that he does not really love Celia but rather wants to have Lavinia back, though it is not necessarily for love. Yet contrary to him, Celia, who

has been contented with the unsatisfied relation with him, comes to hope fulfillment of the love now that his wife has deserted him. In Act II, Edward and Lavinia go to see the psychiatrist, Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, and with his advice, come to terms again and restart their life. Then Celia, too, visits Sir Reilly and, talking with him, chooses a way he suggests, as a way which is "unknown, and so requires faith." For he says to her, "But the way leads towards possession of what you have sought for in the wrong place" (p. 418). Act III takes place in two years, when another cocktail party is about to be held. The members are almost the same, but this time, Lavinia is present and Celia is missing. They hear from the one who has just come back from Kinkanja that Celia was there and killed by heathen people, crucified because she had joined some nursing order and when an insurrection broke out, she would not leave the dying natives to escape the danger.

The Confidential Clark also consists of three acts. In Act I, Sir Claude Mulhammer takes his hidden son Colby as his confidential clark to stay with him. Sir Claude is hoping that his wife Elizabeth will take to Colby and propose to adopt him as their son. In Act II, Colby hears that a girl, named Lucasta Angel, who is always coming to ask money from Claude, is another secret child of Claude. Colby is naturally shocked to know she is a half sister to him. Yet Lucasta takes his shock for a sign of despise and decides to get married with a B. Keghan, who would not despise her. On the other hand, Lady Elizabeth comes to believe that Colby is her own child whom she was parted and lost track of when it was a baby. She only remembers the name of the nurse of her child, that is Mrs. Guzzard at Teddington, and this Mrs. Guzzard was the name of the Colby's aunt who brought him up. In Act III, it is revealed that Colby is the son of Mrs. Guzzard and her deceased husband, that Sir Claud's child was dead with his mother when he was still in her womb, and that Lady Elizabeth's son was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Keghan when his father died and could no longer give financial support to Mrs. Guzzard, who was not wealthy enough to raise the child without it. Thus, it is also revealed that Lady Elizabeth's lost child is Mr. Keghan who is going to marry Lucasta.

The Elder Statesman is also a three act play. In Act I, we see the elder statesman, Lord Claverton, retired from his post because of failing health, living with his only daughter Monica. Monica is devoted to him and though she loves and is loved by Charles, she would not marry him presently lest she should neglect her father. One day, Claverton is visited by an old acquaintance, Fred Culverwell, now having taken his wife's name and called Federico Gomez. Gomez was admiring Claverton when they were students at Oxford and picked up Claverton's extravagant tastes, but because he was poor and could not afford such extravagance, began forgery to get money and was arrested, and after serving terms in prison, went to Central America. He has made a fortune there and come back to see Claverton, asking him to resume friendship. Gomez knows Claverton's secret, that is, when they were driving together, Claverton ran over a man lying on the road but did not stop but ran away. The man turned out to have already been dead and no one was condemned for his death, yet Claverton has been suffering from his guilty conscience for the fact that he did not stop. Yet, he has not been able to confess that sin to Monica. In Act II, Clavarton gets into a hospice, accompanied by Monica. There, he meets a Mrs. Caghill, who was Miss. Maisie Montjoy whom he was in love but did not marry because she belonged to a society that was

disadvantageous to his political career. Mrs. Chaghill is glad to see him again at the hospice, yet Clavarton feels afraid that Monica should know such past of him. Yet in Act III, Claverton comes to get courage to confess all his sins to Monica and, having confessed, finds Monica loves him all the same. He feels liberated and, at the end of the play, we see he will die soon in peace of mind.

III. Realization of Self-identity and Reconciliation with Reality

As we have seen at the beginning, Becket reminds us that "Human kind cannot bear very much reality" (p. 271). "Reality" in English sometimes means the actual state of things as they are, sometimes means metaphysical reality, or the world of Reality as the world of God; or sometimes, it can mean God Himself as the ultimate Real Being and ultimate Reality. Thus, in Eliot's plays, the concepts of reality involve both the actual reality of the present world and metaphysical reality of human existence. What the characters cannot bear are not only their superficial secularly situation and problem but also, or more profoundly, the root of their present problems which is the inherent limitation and sinfulness of man. Becket's words on one hand remind us the words of God in Old Testament where God told Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33, 20) and may seem to signify man's incapacity to grasp God's reality as it really is. Yet on the other hand, and more importantly, these words in Eliot's context remind us how it is difficult for a man to know one's real self undisguised to oneself and, on that knowledge, to establish and accept one's own identity soundly. In his five plays, we shall see how the characters respectively confront and get over this difficulty.

<Murder in the Cathedral>

In a literary criticism "Goethe as the Sage" Eliot lists "Permanence and Universality"[3] as two necessary conditions of a great European poet. The desire to perpetuate oneself and to be universally accepted seems to be axiomatic to Eliot, and in his plays, too, appears as intrinsic to man. Yet, as human beings are mortal and neither one's fame or popularity can be everlasting, this desire is deemed to be frustrated. In Christianity, this may even be regarded to be a desire to overreach human condition and a sin. Becket's wish to be a martyr is this desire to perpetuate himself and, in this play, appears as the deepest and strongest wish even in the saintly Archbishop. Becket is well ready to resist any temptation to resume the King's favour, to get power or to overturn the King's rule. Yet when he is tempted by the fourth tempter to be a martyr, he is shaken. Because, there, he is forced to see his real motive for surrendering himself to the assassinator. The tempter says,

> [. . .] think, Thomas, think of glory after death. [. . .]
> King is forgotten, when another shall come:
> Saint and martyr rule from the tomb. (p. 254)

His real motive that he has not been clearly conscious of till now is "to make [him]self the lowest / On earth, to be high in heaven" (p. 255), that is, to use Becket's own words, to win an "enduring crown" (p. 255). This desire for the everlasting crown is in reality the greatest obstacle to becoming a true martyr. For, if he fails to recognize this deep-rooted desire in himself, he is self-conceited and proud (we should always remember that the pride is regarded as the greatest sin in Christianity, the sin of Satan and the

core of man's original sin), seeing himself as impeccable. It is Becket's real greatness that he can admit this and ask thus,

> Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,
> Does not lead to damnation in pride?
> I well know that these temptations
> Mean present vanity and future torment.
> Can sinful pride be driven out
> Only by more sinful? Can I neither act nor suffer
> Without perdition? (p. 255)

He is answered,

> You know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer.
> You know and do not know, that action is suffering,
> And suffering action. Neither does the agent suffer
> Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
> In an eternal action, an eternal patience
> To which all must consent that it may be willed
> And which all must suffer that they may will it. [. . .] (pp. 255-256)

Difficulty in acquiring true humbleness is intrinsic to man because pride is intrinsic to mankind ever since Adam's original sin. Yet, when one recognizes one's desire of self-perpetuation as proud and, repenting of that as a wrong motivation, surrenders one's whole self together with such willful, self-conceited desire, it would not be wrong after all to will martyrdom.

The four tempters together say,

> All things are unreal,
> Unreal or disappointing:
> [. . .]
> This man is obstinate, blind, intent
> On self-destruction,
> Passing from deception to deception,
> From grandeur to grandeur to final illusion,
> Lost in the wonder of his own greatness,
> The enemy of society, enemy of himself. (p. 256)

Yet, now that he is conscious of his own obstinacy and self-illusion, Becket has got ready to be redeemed by the act of self-surrender to the murderers, and to be saved and be a saint after all. It is his humble recognition of his deepest pride that truly prepares him to be a martyr. In his fear that he might not be able to "act nor suffer/ Without perdition," we see no pride left. Thus, he has changed through true knowledge of himself and is saved by that.

<The Family Reunion>

Among the characters in Eliot's plays, the people at Wishwood are rejecting reality perhaps most

conspicuously and avowedly. It is symbolically expressed in the name of "Wishwood" that they are wishfully closing their eyes to the reality and living in the dream and unreality. Amy did not accept the fact that Harry had got married to a girl whom she did not like, and now that the girl is dead, thinks as if she had never existed. In Amy's mind, "She never would have been one of the family . [. . .]/ A restless shivering painted shadow" (pp. 289-290). In Wishwood, the name of the deceased wife was never mentioned, which seems to be an expression of the family's rejection of her existence. Amy has not allowed any change ever since Harry left home, which is another rejection of the fact that Harry deserted the family, that he chose the life with an outsider, causing a conspicuous difference in the house by the very fact of his absence. Amy repeatedly says "Nothing is changed, Agatha, at Wishwood" (p. 288), or "Harry is to take command at Wishwood. [. . .] Do not discuss his absence. Please behave only/ As if nothing had happened in the last eight years" (pp. 290). In fact, there have been a lot of things happening in the course of time, yet she evades the fact and is living in a world of "as if," willfully mistaking that imaginary world for the reality. She says "I do not want the clock to stop in the dark./ If you want to know why I never leave Wishwood/ That is the reason" (p. 287), and though by this metaphorical expression she means she wants to see to it that Wishwood keeps going without any break, what she actually did was to stop the clock eight years ago. Since that time, she has just waited Harry to move the clock again. Then, Violet, too, supports Amy's attitudes. Although Gerald says it will be a little difficult to behave as if nothing had happened, Violet retorts him "Nonsense, Gerald!/ You must see for yourself it's the only thing to do" (p. 290). Here, the audience will see that it is what Violet says that is really "Nonsense." Yet, this Gerald, too, evades the reality and talks of the accident that killed Harry's wife: "Make him [i.e.Harry] feel that what has happened doesn't matter" (p. 289). When the news of John's accident has arrived, the younger ones are afraid of the shock that the news might give Amy. Thus, Ivy says that "the one thing that matters/ Is not to let her see that anyone is worried./ We must carry on as if nothing had happened,/ And have the cake and presents" (p. 325). They try to disguise the fact that Amy is already so old and weak and that her death is perhaps very near. Violet says, "Except that she can't get about now in winter/ You wouldn't think that she was a day older/ Than on her birthday ten years ago" (p. 315). Yet after all, her heart stops when Harry has gone again. Her words "The clock has stopped in the dark!" (p. 347) show that everything has for her stopped for ever and she could not or would not change even though without change, she would not be able to get fresh energy to live but should decay to die with Wishwood. Man often makes it taboo to mention the inevitability of death, especially of immanent one, and it is an expression of universal human wish to perpetuate oneself. Yet all the same, that is a futile wish and unhealthy. To see his family close their eyes to the reality and alienated themselves from the living world, Harry says,

> You are all people
> To whom nothing has happened, at most a continual impact
> Of external events. You have gone through life in sleep,
> Never woken to the nightmare. I tell you, life would be unendurable
> If you were wide awake. [. . .]
> As for what happens–
> Of the past you can only see what is past,
> Not what is always present. That is what matters.

(pp. 293-294)

Yet, Harry himself has not seen the reality as it really is. Until he sees it, he himself is also bound by the past. In fact, he is the one who most seriously needs to be liberated from the past. He sees visions of the Eumenides, goddesses of revenge, where Mary sees nothing. This fact suggests that he has been tormented by his guilt that he pushed his wife over the deck and killed her, but it is only his imagination that makes him believe he comitted such a crime and see the hallucinations of the Furies. Charles says, "I suspect it is simply that the wish to get rid of her/ Makes him believe he did" (p. 296). Accordingly, this is to be interpreted psychologically thus: since he was a child Harry has been brought up as the eldest son of Amy to please her, as "was part of the design" (p. 306), and has repressed any unfavourable thought in him so that he could live up his family's expectation. Yet the repressed part, appearing in the form of Humenides as if to anticipate the vengence that the offence he would have done but dared not might have incurred, is having him think he has killed his wife. At the same time, these Humenides may also be the externalization of his hatred and loathing for those who are binding him. A psychiatrist Rollo May points it out as a typical psychological problem ever since the middle of the twentieth century that a lot of people have lost sight of themselves as a result of trying to be only as other people expect them to be, instead of pursuing what they themselves really want. He remarks that the hollowness of those people is aptly expressed in Eliot's poem "Hollow Men."[4] And Harry must unconsciously know and grudge his own hollowness.

The attitudes of the Monchenseys alienated from the world and from the reality, deceiving themselves into the belief that everything is all right with them, are expressed by the chorus at the end of Part I:

> We all of us make the pretension
> To be the uncommon exception
> To the universal bondage.[. . .]
> So that we may think well of ourselves. (pp.301-302)

Yet, when Harry has come back from the outer world, he has brought in there an eye that has seen the real life of the actual world, and remarks, for example,

> It's very unnatural,
> This arresting of the normal change of things:
> It only makes the changing of people
> All the more manifest. (p. 305)

And he becomes the first one who changes in the family and to throw away all his pretence and recover his true identity. Then, it is Mary who encourages him to do so: when Harry is still shrinking from facing the reality and says,

> What I see
> May be one dream or another; if there is nothing else
> The most real is what I fear. (p.308)

Mary says,

> You bring your own landscape
> No more real than the other. And in a way you contradict yourself:
> That sudden comprehension of the death of hope
> Of which you speak, I know you have experienced it,
> And I can well imagine how awful it must be.
> But in this world another hope keeps springing
> In an unexpected place, while we are unconscious of it.
> You hoped for something, in coming back to Wishwood,
> Or you would not have come. (p.308)
> [. . .]
> Even if, as you say, Wishwood is a cheat,
> Your family a delusion–then it's *all* a delusion,
> Everything you feel–I don't mean what you think,
> But what you feel. You attach yourself to loathing
> As others do to loving [. . .]
> you deceive yourself
> Like the man convinced that he is paralysed
> Or like the man who believes that he is blind
> While he still sees the sunlight. (p.309)

This brings Harry to step out of his self imprisonment, and it is when he has admitted to Mary, "Perhaps you are right, though I do not know/ How you should know it" (p. 309) that he clearly sees the Humenides for the first time. Mary is in a sense a liberator to him, for these Humenides is an unleashed expression of so far repressed his sub-consciousness. He calls to them,

> Why do you show yourselves now for the first time?
> When I knew her, I was not the same person.
> I was not any person. [. . .]
> I tell you, it is not me you are looking at,
> Not me you are grinning at, not me your confidential looks
> Incriminate, but that other person, if person,
> You thought I was: let your necrophily
> Feed upon that carcase. (p. 311)

Then, when he hears from Agatha his father's frustrated intention to kill Amy, he somehow understands the origin and meaning of the haunting shadow and unhappiness that has been incomprehensible so far. He says,

> Perhaps my life has only been a dream
> Dreamt through me by the minds of others. Perhaps
> I only dreamt I pushed her. (p. 333)

He says,

> Look, I do not know why,
> I feel happy for a moment, as if I had come home.

It is quite irrational, but now
I feel quite happy, as if happiness
Did not consist in getting what one wanted
Or in getting rid of what can't be got rid of
But in a different vision. This is like an end.[. . .]
The things I thought were real are shadows, and the real
Are what I thought were private shadows. (pp. 333-334)

When he has thus realized what has haunted him is only a projection of his private emotion, he can cope with the Eumenides, saying, "This time, you are real, this time, you are outside me/ And just endurable" (p.336), for, he can see them objectively enough, that is, as something "outside." And because he well knows that Wishwood would not change, he chooses to live in the outer, real world where he can establish his own personality.

<Cocktail Party>

This play shows the mutual misunderstanding of a husband and wife, and overcoming of it through realization of each other's personality. Edward and Lavinia have not understood each other. Edward thought that what Lavinia wanted of him was "to be *successful*" (p.394), and Lavinia thought that Edward "only wanted to be bolstered, encouraged. [. . .] To think well of [him]self" (p. 393). She pushed him to work at the bar, found briefs through her friends till he got enough clients without her help; while Edward has tried to be "accommodating" (p. 394), to please Lavinia by doing and becoming as she would like. Thus, when Lavinia suddenly left him, he is forced to see what he thought he was was only some puppet like thing made up by Lavinia without any positive, self-established identity. He realises that he has been a hollow man, as has been Harry in *Family Reunion*. He is told by Dr. Reilly, then still an unidentified guest to him,

[N]obody likes to be left with a mystery.
But there's more to it than that. There's a loss of personality;
Or rather, you've lost touch with the person
You thought you were.
You no longer feel quite human. (p. 362)

Edward asks him, "To what does this lead?" and gets the answer:

To finding out
What you really are. What you really feel.
[. . .]
Most of the time we take ourselves for granted,
As we have to, and live on a little knowledge
About ourselves as we were. Who are you now?
You don't know any more than I do,
But rather less. You are nothing but a set
Of obsolete responses. (p. 363)

When admitting this, he says, "I must find out who she is, to find out who I am" (p. 364).

I see now why I wanted my wife to come back.
It was because of what she had made me into.
We had not been alone again for fifteen minutes
Before I felt [. . .]
The whole oppression, the unreality
Of the role she had always imposed upon me
With the obstinate, unconscious, sub-human strength
That some women have. Without her, it was vacancy.
When I thought she had left me, I began to dissolve,
To cease to exist. That was what she had done to me!
I cannot live with her—that is now intolerable;
I cannot live without her, for she has made me incapable
Of having any existence of my own.(p. 403)

To be aware of his present emptiness becomes the first step to establish his real identity. At the same time, it is the first step to understand Lavinia. When they see each other again in Reilley's office and confess their honest feelings to each other, their real mutual understanding begins. Lavinia says,

I shall always tell the truth now.
We have wasted such a lot of time in lying. (p. 392)

They have not been able to say anything that might be offensive to the other, because they have wanted to see themselves and, to be regarded by the other, as "considerate" (p. 393). They have taken each other "too seriously" (p. 392). This is the same feeling that is expressed by the chorus in *The Family Reunion* thus: "We all of us make the pretension [. . .] So that we may think well of ourselves (pp.301-302). Yet now Edward has decided to live not as Lavinia's puppet but to become true both to himself and to Lavinia. Edward says,

You say you were trying to 'encourage' me:
Then why did you always make me feel insignificant?
I may not have known what life I wanted,
But it wasn't the life you chose for me. (p.394)

They are no longer afraid to say,

Edward: One of the most infuriating things about you
Has always been your perfect assurance
That you understood me better than I understood myself.
Lavinia: And the most infuriating thing about you
Has always been your placid assumption
That I wasn't worth the trouble of understanding. (p.395)

To be able to argue each other thus, expecting response from the other, is to admit that the other is not a puppet but a human being with a personality, which would have unexpected characters which is not necessarily ideal. Lavinia even says, "That will be a novelty/ To find that you have a mind to speak./ Anyway, I'm prepared to take you as you are" (p. 395). Only by this, they can build a new healthy rela-

tionship as a husband and wife. They now admit that they married each other not necessarily from pure love. She confesses that she married him because he was "rather attractive" and "kept on *saying* that [he] was in love with [her]." He also confesses that he said he was in love with her just because "Everybody told [him] that [he] was" and that he married her because they told him "how well suited" they were. (p. 396) Reilley tells Edward that Lavinia had wanted to be loved and when she knew Edward did not love her, she came to think no one had ever loved her and then began to fear that no one *could* love her. He also tells him that they are, although living together as a husband and wife, similarly living in "isolation" (p. 410). However, now, as Edward has realized since Lavinia left him that "Hell is oneself,/ Hell is alone, the other figures in it/ Merely projections" (p. 397), they do not wish to go back to the alienated way of living where even one's own partner was only a projection of ones ideal, a thing to be manipulated and not a living human personality. Thus, as Edward says, "Lavinia, we must make the best of a bad job" (p. 410), they set about making up their emptiness and start a new life. This is the end of their dream and illusion.

Celia, too, when she has become aware that Edward does not in fact love her, realizes she was living in a dream, that she has been projecting her ideal on Edward. When she has realized that the Edward whom she was seeing was not the real Edward, she leaves him. In a sense, her course is the same as that of Lavinia and Edward, in that it is a way of getting over the illusion and finding her real identity in a concrete life. She now understands that what she was craving for was not Edward but some deeper love that is within herself. This recognition stirs her to take a religious course and finally leads her to her martyrdom.

> For what happened is remembered like a dream
> In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
> In the spirit, a vibration of delight
> Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
> In the delight of loving. [. . .]
> But what, or whom I loved,
> Or what in me was loving, I do not know.
> And if that is all meaningless, I want to be cured of a craving for something I cannot find
> And of the shame of never finding it. (p.417)

This motive of spiritual pilgrimage of Celia reminds us of intrinsic solitudes of human beings that forever and universally incite them to seek for something that would fill that solitude and finally lead them to God.

<*The Confidential Clark*>

Search of self-identity is the most conspicuous theme of *The Confidential Clark*. Colby has been brought up as a hidden son of Claud, but he lacks the feeling of security about his root. He has not felt any filial feelings to Claud and expresses the sense of insecurity in the words: "I've never had a father or a mother" (p. 513). Therefore, when Elizabeth begins to say he must be her son, he cannot help asking his identity seriously. For Colby, the moment of the revelation of his birth and his identity becomes the moment of his liberation. He says

I wished to know the truth.
What it is, doesn't matter. All I wanted was relief
From the nagging annoyance of knowing there's a fact
That one doesn't know. But the fact itself
Is unimportant, once one knows it. (p. 513)

With the knowledge of his identity, he decides to be an organist though he knows he is not much talented, rather than to go into business as Claud's son.

This gives me freedom [. . .]
I want to be an organist.
It doesn't matter about success–
I aimed too high before–beyond my capacity.
But my father was an unsuccessful organist. [. . .]
And I wish to follow my father. (pp. 515-516)

He thus accepts the truth revealed to him, and so accepting the self-identity with its limitation, starts life realistically and modestly. Then, somewhat paradoxically, Colby comes to love Claude more than before when he thought he had to love him as his father. He says, "Now that I've abandoned my illusions and ambitions/ All that's left is love" (p. 517).

On the other hand, while Claud and Elizabeth are discussing Colby's parentage, neither of them in fact cares whose son Colby really is. As Claude remarks, Elizabeth has "always lived in a world of make-believe" (p. 462) and the real world of concrete everyday life does not have as much importance to her as her make-believe world. She says "Claude! I don't want to take away from you/ The son you thought was yours. [. . .]/Let us regard him as being *our* son:/ It won't be the same as what we had wanted–/But in some ways better!" (p.491) Then, Claude, too, does not care so much as to contradict Elizabeth. This is because this world does not have much meaning to Claude, either. He wanted to be a potter, and to him it is the world of pottery that is "life itself. [. . .] /If it is an escape, is escape into living,/ Escape from a sordid world to a pure one" (p.464). Not that he does not see any meaning in his worldly business. He says, "I loathed this occupation/ Until I began to feel my power in it./ The life changed me, as it is changing you:/ It begins as a kind of make-believe/ And the make-believing makes it real" (p.464). So he admits now his business is also worth doing. Yet, still, he is conscious that somehow, he, too, is living in a world of make-believe.

Claude has lost his identity in the persona of a financial man. Since he has hidden the would-be potter deep inside him, he is failed to be understood even by his wife. This failure has one thing that has led to miscommunication between Claude and Elizabeth. Elizabeth also had an unrealized dream that she has not told to him and so failed to be understood. Yet now, Claude confesses to her his frustrated dream, and when he has done so, she tells him her dream was to inspire an artist. He tells her "I took it for granted that what you wanted/ Was a husband of importance. I thought you would despise me/ If you knew what I'd really wanted to be" (p495). To him, then, Elizabeth says,

And I took it for granted that you were not interested
In anything but financial affairs;

And that you needed me chiefly as a hostess.
It's a great mistake, I do believe,
For married people to take anything for granted. (p. 495)

On this understanding, they come to see each other as his or her equal partner, feeling neither unreasonable inferiority complex nor unfair aloofness.

Elizabeth: It's very strange, Claude, but this is the first time
I have talked to you, without feeling very stupid.
You always made me feel that I wasn't worth talking to.
Claude: And you always made me feel that *your* interests
Were much too deep for discussing with me. (pp. 495-496)

This is the beginning of their real life together. This new life upon true understanding of each other corresponds, on the level of a husband and wife, to an individual's recovery of self identity and coming back to the real world from the world of dream and illusion.

Elizabeth's growth is shown at the end of the drama, when she responds to Kaghan's words, "I think we all made the same mistake [. . .]/ We wanted Colby to be something he wasn't." She says,

I suppose that's true of you and me, Claude.
Between not knowing what other people want of one,
And not knowing what one should ask of other people,
One does make mistakes! But I mean to do better.
Claude, we've got to try to understand our children. (p. 519)

This is her way of starting living awake in the real world, to start trying to "bear reality."

Then, in this drama, self-identity is a great matter for Kaghan and Lucasta, too. They have failed to establish their true identity because they have thought they are by birth to be regarded as despicable and couldn't quite accept themselves. They are going to get married and its main reason has been that each is not despised by the other: Kaghan says, "I've no background–no background at all. That's one thing I like about Lucasta: She doesn't despise me," and Lucasta tells him in return that "Nobody could despise you./ And what's more important, you don't despise *me*" (p. 480). They are afraid of being despised by others because they lack self-confidence and therefore, in their own judgement of themselves, depend on other people's judgement. Lucasta says she feels "insecure" (p. 472) and expresses that feeling in the words, "I hardly feel that I'm even a person:/ Nothing but a bit of living matter/ Floating on the surface of the Regent's Canal" (p. 473). Thus, she, too, has been a type of Eliot's "hollow men", carrying emptiness inside. Yet, when Kaghan is revealed his identity as the son of Lady Elizabeth, Kaghan is liberated from his rootlessness, and Lucasta, by being loved by the new Kaghan who has secured his identity, can together get over her inferiority complex and insecurity. Keghan tells Elizabeth and Claude,

And we should like to understand *you*. . .
I mean, I'm including both of you,
Claude. . .and Aunt Elizabeth.
You know, Claude, both Lucasta and I

Would like to mean something to you . . . if you'd let us;
And we'd take the responsibility of meaning it. (p. 519)

This is a manifestation that he is now confident that he can "mean," that is, can be of importance to other people as an individual that can take responsibility as a positive personality.

<*The Elder Statesman*>

The Elder Statesman is a drama of throwing away self-disguise and finding liberation through recovering self-identity and acceptance of it.

At the beginning of the drama, Lord Claverton is feeling bitter about the fact that he will soon be forgotten in the society once he is dead. People around him are trying to make him not to think about death at all. The hospice he is in is called "*convalescent* home" (p. 528) and kept to look like a hotel. This is an attempt, as we have seen in *The Family Reunion* about Amy, to avert the eyes to the inevitable fact of immanent death.

Claverton laments,

My obituary, if I had died in harness,
Would have occupied a column and a half
With an inset, a portrait taken twenty years ago.
In five years time, it will be the half of that;
In ten years' time, a paragraph. (p. 531)

He seems to measure his value by the number of lines of his obituary, and he knows the coldness of people,

When we go, a good many folk are mildly grieved,
And our closest associates, the small minority
Of those who really understand the place we filled
Are inwardly delighted. (p. 531)

Under this, there is awareness that his social relations are not based on love but on interests, and that as a bare human being, he is alone. Monica knows he is alienated from the people around him. She knows that although he has always been trying to be a leading public figure, he has in fact been afraid of meeting people with his face undisguised. She says,

In politics, Father wore a public label.
And later, as chairman of public companies,
Always his privacy has been preserved. (p. 528)

His course of life has been a course to lose his real self under his public persona. The change of his name symbolically shows this. The young Dick Ferry became Richard Claverton Ferry when he got married with Miss Claverton, and now he has come to pass as Sir Claverton, altogether having dropped his original name. Thus, the Dick Ferry is now hidden under the public figure Sir Claverton. He has tried to work hard as Sir Claverton, and this should be because, at least partly, he has wanted to be remembered as a

great politician. Yet, in fact, there is another reason. As we learn when Gomez and Mrs. Carghill appear and reveal his past sinful deeds, he has had desire to bury his real, guilty, self under the persona of Lord Claverton. He has been afraid of having his real self known, and believed it is not worth loving and would not be loved even by his daughter. As he says later,

> I've spent my life in trying to forget myself,
> In trying to identify myself with the part
> I had chosen to play. And the longer we pretend
> The harder it becomes to drop the pretence,
> Walk off the stage, change into our own clothes
> And speak as ourselves. So I'd become an idol
> To Monica. She worshipped the part I played:
> How could I be sure that she would love the actor
> If she saw him, off the stage [. . .] (pp. 568-569)

We human beings tend to be the more conscious of other people's opinion about ourselves the more we lack self-confidence. This is also true of Claverton, as was of Kaghan and Lucasta we have seen above. Because he is not confident of his moral goodness, he is afraid of being despised by Monica and could not reveal his real self.

On the other hand, Claverton, by his power and connections, got his son, Michael, a job that he thought to be good enough for the son of the honorable Lord Claverton, the retired statesman. His wish that his son should get a high status is an expression of his desire to perpetuate himself through his son, to survive in the society his physical death. Yet such an attempt is futile and only to deprive Michael of his independent self-identity. Michael at last decides to work away from his father's influence, in the central America under Gomez, and that is the way how he finds his identity and freedom.

The change and liberation of Lord Claverton, as was the case with Harry in *The Family Reunion*, begins with his self recognition. When Michael pronounces his independence of his father's influence that so far has bound him, Claverton tells him he is "a fugitive from reality" (p. 560). He says,

> Believe me, Michael:
> Those who flee from their past will always lose the race.
> I know this from experience. (p. 561)

Yet, while telling his son such a lesson, he is forced to think how he himself has been running away from reality. Then, the re-encounter with Gomez and Mrs. Carghill that reminds him his past sins farther makes him see his real self.

What is characteristic of Eliot's plays is that when the characters recognize their weakness or sin, they are liberated and find their spiritual peace instantly. In *The Cocktail Party*, it is said "Only by acceptance/ Of the past will you alter its meaning" (p. 439); and it is significant that, in these plays, the mere recognition, or acceptance of the fact of the past as it really was, often has the effect of purification and atonement. Agatha in *The Family Reunion* tells Harry, "What we have written is not a story of detection,/ Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation" (p. 333), and this is more or less true of all the five plays by Eliot. Then, a most remarkable thing is that, in the expiation, an atoning act is not necessarily

asked for. The mere confession, accompanied by the repentance if the sin was actual, takes away, or purifies, the guilty feelings. Only, it should be remarked that the confession itself is not an easy matter. It needs courage. Claverton says,

> It's harder to confess the sin that no one believes in
> Than the crime that everyone can appreciate.
> For the crime is in relation to the law
> And the sin is in relation to the sinner. (p. 573)

Yet, he dares to confess everything to Monica. And what leads him to do so and saves him is his love and wish to be true to Monica and Monica's love for him. Monica loves him as he really is as a human being with sinfulness and frailty, not as a great statesman or an ideal father: and it is all the more significant that it is only because he is loving as well as being loved by Monica that he finds himself saved. Or rather, active loving is even more important than the passive love. For, as Victor Frankl insightfully points out, man can find meanings in his life by loving someone or even something.[5] It is loving that has salvific power. Claverton says,

> If a man has one person, just one in his life,
> To whom he is willing to confess everything–
> And that includes, mind you, not only things criminal,
> Not only turpitude, meanness and cowardice,
> But also situations which are simply ridiculous,
> When he has played the fool (as who has not?)–
> Then he loves that person, and his love will save him. (p. 561)

Thus, when he confesses his sin, he can accept himself with all his past and feels happiness and peace of mind. Amy in *The Family Reunion*, although admitting, "I always wanted too much for my children/ More than life can give" (p. 345), does not want to change her way nor repents it. She wants to keep everything in Wishwood as it is, to stop the clock in the dark, so to speak, and it stops literally with her death. Yet contrary to her, Claverton feels he is renewed and revived, as he says, "in becoming no one, I begin to live" (p. 582), although physically, he knows he is to die shortly.

> This may surprise you: I feel at peace now.
> It is the peace that ensues upon contrition
> When contrition ensues upon knowledge of the truth.
> [. . .]
> I've only just now had the illumination
> Of knowing what love is. We all think we know,
> But how few of us do! And now I feel happy–
> In spite of everything, in defiance of reason,
> I have been brushed by the wing of happiness. (p. 581)

IV. Conclusion

Loss of self-identity, that leads to self-alienation because it necessarily involves the lack of self-confi-

dence and causes empty feelings, is a problem not only for Eliot but for many of us living today. Without the self that confronts reality, one would not be able to face the real world. As long as one is suffering from self-alienation, one would not bear any reality, for accepting one's own self is the first step to accept any reality. In the five dramas, Eliot shows this through several cases. It is also important in these plays that there cannot be true love and true relationship without true understanding and *vise versa*. In either way, understanding of the real situation and then courage to change it if necessary are indispensable. Although human being may not be able to bear "too much" reality, they will be able to bear enough reality for them to live without illusion.

Notes

1) The quotations are all from *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (Faber and Faber 1969).
2) The sense of incapacity to grasp and express Reality can be seen, for instance, in these words below, though it is in fact inappropriate to specify only a few passages, for it is rather pervading the whole poems.

> And would it have been worth it, after all,
> Would it have been worth while [. . .]
> It is impossible to say just what I mean!
> . . .
> No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
> Am an attendant lord [. . .]
> At times, indeed, almost ridiculous–
> Almost, at times, the Fool. ("The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")
>
> Doubtful [. . .]
> Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
> Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon. . . ("Portrait of a Lady")
>
> Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.
> Time past and time future
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present. ("Burnt Norton," I, *Four Quartets*)
>
> So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years–
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words [. . .]
> In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
> Undisciplined squads of emotion.("East Coker," V, in *Four Quartets*)

3) Eliot, "Goethe as the Sage," in *On Poetry and Poets* (Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 211.
4) ロロ・メイ『失われし自己をもとめて』改訳版. (Japanese tr. of Rollo May, *Man's Search for Himself* by Yasuhiro Ono & Kazuya Ono (Seishin Shobo, 1995)), pp. 5-7. The passage May is referring to goes as follows:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion,
("The Hollow Men," *Collected Poems* (Harcourt Brace, 1943), P. 101)

5) V.E.フランクル『それでも人生にイエスと言う』(Japanese tr. of Viktor E. Frankl, *Trotzdem Ja zum Leben Sagen*, by Kunio Yamada & Mike Matsuda (Shunjusha, 1993)), p.35.